

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—*Goethe.*

"WHATEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—*Paul.*

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those who pour inadequate information of the occult broadcast is very great; it is very much as though aconitine or some such drug should be distributed heedlessly among the people to do with it what they will.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

The "Christian World," speaking of Mr. Stead's "Borderland," says:—

That Mr. Stead has been powerfully moved in the direction he is now taking by his own recent experiences is not to be wondered at. He details these in an article entitled, "My Experience in Automatic Writing." The most remarkable of them is, perhaps, the story about Mr. John Morley's Newcastle election contest. On his way to the North for the bye-election of August last Mr. Morley called at Mowbray House and predicted that he should be beaten. Mr. Stead held that he would get in by the skin of his teeth. Immediately after Mr. Morley's departure Mr. Stead took up his pen to inquire about Newcastle from his familiar. His spook, "Julia," wrote that the Secretary for Ireland would have a majority of about 1,400. The actual majority was 1,739. "Julia" explained that more people than she expected. If stories of this kind become current we may predict that the greatest rush into Spiritualism will be from the circles of the Turf and the Stock Exchange. Mr. Stead in his preface insists that there is no money in spooks, but a tip from "Julia" on the eve of the Derby will to some of these gentry appear likely to have a good deal of money in it.

The "Christian World" has hit the dangerous spot; and has more than hinted at one of the reasons why the warning we presumed to utter some months ago was made. The spread of a superficial knowledge may become very great, but it may, alas! be the spread of a very debasing knowledge. The "Christian World" goes on:—

There is no doubt that in his new departure Mr. Stead has caught a rising tide. Occultism is the new European fashion. "Paris," we learn from a paper by Napoleon Ney, "is the focus of an occult agitation participated in by thousands of adepts, belonging principally to the intellectual classes. In their secret meetings the adepts, cabalists, Spiritualists, Theosophists, produce phenomena which the ancients would have called prodigies or miracles." And the movement is spreading everywhere. We regard it, and the position Mr. Stead is now taking with reference to it, with mixed feelings. While sympathising with his purpose, and appreciating to the full the courage, enterprise, and ability which he is bringing to this work as to everything else he touches, we are in great doubt as to the utility, or even safety, of his newly-proclaimed methods. We have beforetime in these columns expressed the conviction that the phenomena in question are legitimate subjects of investigation. But we have been careful to add the opinion which we, in common with a large number of his most influential correspondents now reiterate, that the subject is one for trained minds only to deal with, and that to throw it open indiscriminately to the public, as "Borderland" seems to propose, will open the door to every kind of delusion, will add enormously to the victims of hysteria and nervous disorders, and will render necessary the speedy erection of supplementary lunatic asylums.

We hope the "supplementary lunatic asylums" will not be necessary, but the responsibility resting on the heads of

We are glad to find that Mrs. Besant also recognises the danger of approaching the Unseen without sufficient preparation. In "Lucifer," she says of Mr. Stead's venture:—

Mr. Stead has taken a bold step in his issue of "Borderland," the first number of which will reach the public simultaneously with this number of "Lucifer." He declares that his experience has convinced him that "there is a great deal more in so-called occult studies than the public has any conception of." This is the unvarying testimony of those who investigate for themselves, but none the less will those who have never investigated at all put their ignorance in support of vehement denial of the possibility of occult phenomena. Mr. Stead is forming circles of students for systematic study of occult phenomena, such as are on the "borderland" of Occultism. As the race evolves much that is now borderland will become recognised inhabited country, but one may venture a hope that these eager pioneers, invading the astral realms without chart or guide, will not leave too many of their number lost in that dangerous land. They are taking up the study without any of the rules for personal guidance in conduct that have hitherto from time immemorial served as conditions for occult training, and with the meat-eating and wine-drinking habits of the mass of English men and women new perils will surround the experimenters.

Nor was it to be expected that so vivacious a journalist as Mr. T. P. O'Connor would remain silent. So we get this in the "Weekly Sun":—

What between Mr. Stead, Mr. Meyers (*sic*), the Psychical Research Society, the "Palmist," "Lucifer," "Borderland," Mrs. Besant and the Theosophists, or Esoteric Buddhists, the science of "Occultism" is beginning to look up; and the poor ghosts, or spooks, as is now the fashion to call them, are evidently in for a brisk and anxious time. Surely Mr. Stead's "Borderland" is a phenomenon in itself. A quarterly review, devoted entirely to the hunt for the spook, is such a portent as we have not seen in England since King James published his tractate on the sure method of discovering witches. And now Mr. Stead himself has become, in his own person, an object of psychical research. There has arrived to him from the world of the unseen, one "Julia," a familiar spirit, who reveals to him all sorts of things about other people's business, and, apparently, dictates a good many of his articles. The Psychical Research Society, greatly excited by this fact, has taken to investigating Mr. Stead as if he were a sort of Cock-lane ghost, bringing all the solemn machinery of the society to bear upon the task, the versatile journalist submitting to the process with the utmost complacency. An expectant world will await the result, which is probably to be published in the next issue of "Borderland." What the upshot of all this occultry will be it is hard to foresee. Professor Geikie is "inclined to fear that the publication of 'Borderland' may tend to increase the population of our lunatic asylums." This, however, sounds too much like the voice of brutal common-sense, which is inclined to become tyrannical if too much thwarted. It may be as well for Mr. Stead, Mr. Myers, and the rest, that men like Professor Geikie are not wielders of despotic power in these countries, or we might see them all sent to the stake as soon as it occurred to these rulers that psychical research was in danger of reaching the proportion of a public nuisance.

Under all this would-be jocularity, there is a substratum of truth. "Common-sense" (which is the term used by ignorant people for connoting their ignorance) is sure to take the alarm, and fear will help ignorance in the opposition to the broadcast sowing of a weak-kneed Occultism. How great the ignorance is, is shown in the association of Mr. Myers with Mr. Stead and Mrs. Besant in that spook-hunting which so amuses the Editor of the "Weekly Sun," who, however, does not hesitate to publish and largely advertise the life-story of one of the triad. Nor is Mr. O'Connor much less exercised about Mr. Andrew Lang, who, dedicating to Mr. R. L. Stevenson a new book of his—when is there not a new book of Mr. Lang's?—a book in which the "good people" figure, says:—

To speak the truth, I tak'na shame
To half believe them.

Another Saul among the prophets! Where will it end?

Suggestions have been made that a debate between some leading Theosophist and Spiritualist might be useful. We doubt very much the value of such exhibitions, except to the proprietors of St. James's Hall. If we mistake not, moreover, Mrs. Besant has been offered the opportunity, which she refused to accept.

WITCH BURNING IN FRANCE.

We quote the following from the "Review of Reviews" for July 15th:—

In his second article on the "Witchcraft Trials of the Seventeenth Century" in the "Nouvelle Revue," M. Delacroix, although writing from a sceptical point of view, and with apparently no belief in the marvels he himself admits to have been widely believed and vouched for by credible witnesses, gives an interesting addition to the history of mediæval Spiritualism. Not only the credulous and the ignorant, but some of the most noted scientific and medical authorities of the seventeenth century evidently took the spirits *au grand sérieux*; notably Felix Blater, who for more than fifty years was known as a Swiss Prince of Science, made an exhaustive inquiry into the subject, and finally acknowledged that there was no doubt that evil and other spirits might take possession of a human being. Daniel Senart, a medical professor of Wittenburg, also recognised that those possessed by spirits acquired the power of taking aerial excursions, in what Spiritualists of to-day would call their astral bodies. As for the magistrates, they never doubted at all the power of spirits or the existence of sorcery. De Thou, the well-known mediaeval historian, was a firm believer in astrology. Nicolas, who seems to have been the first writer to utter a protest against torture, declared that to deny the existence of sorcerers was a sure mark of ignorance. Many judges were afraid of condemning witches for fear of the result to themselves; but a councillor reassured them by observing that "nothing can happen without the will of God; against His justice the sorcerer can do nothing; neither can the little devils who are their masters."

M. Delacroix gives a striking account of Pierre de Lanert, a councillor of the Bordeaux Parliament, who was sent by the authorities to judge a number of demoniacs in the Labourd district; by his order five hundred of these poor creatures were burned to death, and he wrote on the subject of demoniac possession two important works, which gave him quite a reputation in the literary world of that day. And yet this Lanert, points out the writer in the "Nouvelle Revue," who evidently believed the extraordinary confessions made him by his victims, was "a man of the world, a laborious lawyer, a distinguished writer, whose eloquent and easy style often rose to grandeur, and who was so far in advance of his century that in one of his works, the 'Livre des Princes,' he was not afraid to say that the law was greater than the King."

"E. L. C." sends the following: "Numbers: Their Occult Power and Mystic Virtues." By W. Wynn Westcote, 4s. Published at 7, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., is probably a translation of Hellenbach's work, wanted by "C.C.M."

PALMISTRY AND THE POLICE.

The following remarks appear in the current number of the "Palmist":—

The statement made by the Home Secretary the other day in the House of Commons on the subject of palmistry will, it is to be hoped, ease the consciences of such of Her Majesty's lieges who had doubts and scruples on the question of the lawfulness of the practice of the science. Having the direct statement of Mr. Asquith that the mere practice of palmistry is not in itself illegal, it becomes necessary for those who desire to put a stop to this harmless and useful scientific pursuit, to prove against the palmists that they commit the offence of endeavouring to impose. This, no doubt, will put a great obstacle in the way of the narrow-minded, prejudiced, and old-fashioned people who always wish to persecute and abolish anything the meaning of which is beyond their limited understanding, and who have neither the desire nor the patience to endeavour to get to the bottom of the subject nor to comprehend the meaning of all that which they would fain see drive from the face of the earth. For our own selves, the Chirological Society has never had any fears of the terrors of the law; we have never had anything to do with fortune-telling and such like humbug; our objects and attainments have always been most clearly and straightforwardly expressed, and we do not cultivate any absurd mystery. If we are obliged still to use the old word Palmistry for the new science, it is only because we cannot as yet get the world to understand what is meant by chirology, and it is always difficult if not impossible to change a name, when we are not the originators of the subject, but only followers, and let us hope improvers of that which has preceded us during the last twenty years. This is about the time since palmistry left off being merely the handmaiden of astrology and properly set up as establishment of her own.

It seems to us curious that our contemporaries cannot understand the meaning and application of the law of the 24th Victoria. They are always crying out that it is a shame and unfair that the gipsy fortune-tellers are occasionally taken to the police-court for what they imagine to be the same offence as that committed by the usual run of Bond-street palmists. They fail altogether to see that the Act was passed for the protection of the poor from imposture, not the rich, who are perfectly well able to take care of themselves. For ourselves we do not practise among the poor, except voluntarily for the purposes of experience. If our work had been a mass of imposture, it would never have stood the incredulous and sometimes hostile criticism of the best minds and most cultivated intellects of the world for seven years. It would have died out in ignominious disgrace in two or three months. There is no need for a law to protect the cultivated intelligence of the two worlds in which we hold our own.

There is an example of what we mean in the conduct of the police towards the word competitions as shown in some newspapers lately. This had been going on for some time in a quiet way until suddenly it grew to a mad craze, and it was not until the people began to rob each other and steal money to pay the entrance fees and do other wrong things, that the police found out it came under the Lottery Act and stopped it accordingly. Thus the laws are enacted for the protection of the poor and ignorant, and it is not until these are attacked that action is taken in matters of this kind. This, I take it, is the standpoint taken up by the authorities, and their view of the affair. Of course, as we said before, this has nothing to do with the Chirological Society's work, but it is, perhaps, as well to put a plausible explanation before those of our contemporaries who keep clamouring with a foolish and would-be democratic and sentimental pose on behalf of an absurdly invented oppression of the always honest poor by the always dishonest rich.

THE greatest results in life are usually attained by simple means, and the exercise of ordinary qualities. The common life of every day, with its cares, necessities, and duties, affords ample opportunity for acquiring experience of the best kind; and its most beaten paths provide the true worker with abundant scope for effort and room for self-improvement. The great high road of human welfare lies along the old highway of steadfast well-doing, and they who are the most persistent and work in the truest spirit will invariably be the most successful.—SAMUEL SMILES.

DIVINATION AND AUGURY IN A MODERN LIGHT.

Mr. F. W. Thurston, whose contributions to the "Theosophist" we have more than once found valuable, has commenced some papers in that journal with the above title. He speaks with some confusion of Spiritualism as the outcome of Mesmerism:—

These went further than the mesmerists, in believing that these abnormal states may be induced by other means than passes and suggestions, viz., by sitting in circles, and consequent development of mediumship, and, as their mediums persisted like mesmerised clairvoyants in maintaining that they saw and heard other invisible beings, the Spiritualist camp maintained the existence of these beings as a fact, and then went beyond the mesmerists in affirming that a susceptible subject can be mesmerised not only by living incarnated operators, but also by these unseen beings, provided these unseen beings have certain conditions allowed them, viz., tranquillity or passivity of the minds of all present, absence of disturbing influences in the ether, like strong light, the presence of harmonious vibration of the air as caused by music, perfumes, and incense—and the presence of the bodily emanations (or magnetism) of certain others in the circle.

After this Mr. Thurston continues:—

Once admit this possibility as a fact, and nearly every case of augury becomes easily explained. The unseen spirits can automatically move the mediumistic fingers to draw, the tongue and lips to give utterances, the hand to draw a card or a lot; and if a man's movements, why not also, *a fortiori*, a bird's, a beast's? They can make a bird to fly across your path or a beast to howl. But the Spiritualists do more than this. They have definitely decided that these unseen intelligences are those of human spirits disincarnated, not necessarily dead, possibly severed, in the form of a spirit-body or "double," from the flesh, temporarily, by a trance, abstraction, or deep slumber—but still human. This theory—if it can only once be accepted by an inquiring mind through some personal experience—will throw another flood of clear light on the augural practices of the ancient Etruscans and Romans, and indeed of all the Semitic and Indo-European nations. If these beings are human they would naturally continue to take an interest in their descendants, especially if these descendants kept up the old spirit that animated them, and, if these beings had a wider purview of the environment, it was worth while to consult their advice; hence every Roman family and Gens consulted the spirits of its ancestors; and the nation, going to war, did the same. When experience taught the diviners that these beings could influence movements of muscles and thoughts automatically various codes were devised by which these spirits could communicate their ideas, and, as long as parties on both sides were aware of these codes, communication between the two worlds could be easily kept up. There is, perhaps, no reason in itself why a raven should be a sign of ill-fortune; but let it be settled by the code that a raven croaking under special strange circumstances means disaster, and a white swan means prosperity, and an eagle something else, and that numbers mean something, and the direction something, then friends in the unseen world could communicate as the operator in the Morse code of telegraphy does when the receiver knows that a short stroke means "e" and a long one means "t."

So in the same way with throwing the staff, dreams, consulting of cards; prophecy by means of them requires the possession of a mutual code, be the understanding what it may, and differing possibly among different people; but, given the code, and a person whose muscles or movements may be influenced, and the explanation and reasonableness of the practice is easily seen. Here may be also an explanation of the practice called Horary Astrology, of deciding on a course of action by casting a figure of the heavens for the precise moment when the thought first presented itself, or the event that started the proposal occurred. If we have an established code, understood by certain denizens of the spirit-world, that a certain position of a planet means encouragement and another means warning, we can easily be advised by unseen friends, who have only to wait for a certain moment of time and then to prompt the thought in our brain to cast a figure. They could also, of course, just as easily prompt a feeling directly of success or danger within our brain, and they do so, perhaps; only we are apt to think such promptings to be the promptings of ourselves. It is difficult to say—according to the Spiritualist's theory—what are our own

thoughts and what are impressions from others, each man's brain being apparently a musical instrument, on which sometimes the owner plays, and sometimes his co-spirits, if I may use the term.

Whether Mr. Thurston intends to combat this theory or not, we do not know, but he has put the case pretty concisely.

RECORDS OF PRIVATE SEANCES.

FROM NOTES TAKEN AT THE TIME OF EACH SITTING.

No. LXIV.

FROM THE RECORDS OF MRS. S.

November 28th, 1877.—We sat alone this evening, but the séance was very disturbed. We were told many spirits had followed the medium from the churchyard where he had been in the day-time, attending the funeral of a relative. Scent was most abundant, many strange raps were heard, and different sounds were made by the ghostly visitors our medium had attracted from the churchyard. Both Mentor and Kabbila manifested, and a stone belonging to Mr. S. M. was brought to him; it had been taken from him on his birthday.

December 9th.—This evening Mr. Percival joined the circle. Scent and raps came very freely. Dr. S.'s father manifested for the first time; he was described as standing near his son. A gold cross and a turquoise were brought for Mr. Percival, who was on the eve of departure for Greece.

Imperator controlled, and said: "We have brought our friend a cross from the medium's store, and it is charged with our power, and it will be of great service to him. It is a talisman filled with remedial and protective power. Faith in such objects is not absolutely necessary, but it adds to their power and efficacy. Now we must leave, as we only came to wish our friend 'God speed.' Farewell."

January 12th, 1878.—After a month's absence the circle met this evening. Much scent was brought, and many pearl beads; we had also direct spirit writing. Imperator controlled and offered the following prayer: "Thou Great Spirit who knowest our necessities, and readest our thoughts, in Thine hands we place ourselves. For us who have progressed, and for these Thy children our supplication is, mercy, mercy, for all our shortcomings, and help in all our difficulties. O God, help us now and evermore. Amen."

"We have that to say to you suitable to your wants. The objects we had in view are now being accomplished, the foundation is laid, and the superstructure will come in time. Your spirit guides are ever ready to extend the helping hand to all who seek for it. Our work is not bounded, and we have the good of humanity in view. Your sojourn in the world is your school time and fixes your future state. You have no knowledge of the forces that are at work. The fight between good and evil has been going on with us, and the adversaries are let loose. There are evil spirits, but no devil, as the Church has taught.

"There is much in the future which will try our resources, but with us the fight is nearly over; when fought out in your world, then will come a time of rest and peace. We speak words of woe and tell of difficulties, but the spiritual landscape shall be illuminated, and at evening time there shall be light."

January 19th.—The home circle met again this evening. Two pearls were brought for Charlton. There was much scent in the room, both dry and wet verbena. By request our handkerchiefs were saturated with it. Mentor, Kabbila, Rector, and Catharine rapped freely. There was also direct spirit-writing given to R. on a piece of paper she had signed before sitting down.

The Baron rapped on the floor, making a sound as of a wooden leg; he answered questions and gave messages. Dr. S.'s father rapped incoherently. Mentor and Imperator controlled, answering questions. Imperator said: "The state of the world was bad, and would be worse, as there would be much social, moral, political, and theological disturbance, the throes of a new birth, and they always accompanied a fresh revelation of truth. The world was in a state of anxiety and the people in it were too much engaged in material things connected with their bodies. They prided themselves upon being practical, and when they did think of spiritual things they occupied themselves with curious questionings, instead of receiving the most glorious truth that had come to the world since the days of John the Baptist and the Christ."

PROFESSOR LOMBROSO'S THEORIES.
May 29, 1882.

Imperator then said: "Cultivate your spirits now by higher aspirations, morally, intellectually, affectionately, and spiritually, as all belong to the spirit. Use self-denial, self-abnegation, and moderation in all things. The medium's spirit is now in the spheres, gone with guardians for instruction. Others might gain the powers he possessed, were their spirits as noble, true, and unselfish. The spirit should leave the body in sleep. Drop the personal, and let your influence always be for good. Widon your sympathies, sink self, and ye shall have powers ye dream not of. Farewell."

February 3rd.—We again sat alone. Much delicious scent was brought, and the usual physical manifestations occurred. A piece of paper was thrown down by me, and a pencil put into my hand. On striking a light I found Imperator's signature on the paper, also Mentor's and that of Benjamin Franklin. Franklin then controlled and answered our questions.

February 10th.—This evening Mr. Percival sat with us. Much scent was wafted over the circle, first violet, then dry violets, and afterwards a quantity of the wet perfume was rained over us by request. G. manifested more freely than usual, producing his varied musical notes, both loud and soft. There was much rapping, and then Mentor controlled, and said, "Medium was ill : recorded manifestations."

Kathilia and Catharine also rapped and answered many questions. The scent of sandalwood then came very strongly; upon putting his hand to his head Mr. S. M. said his hair was quite wet with it, and as fast as he wiped it off it reappeared, apparently coming from the crown of his head. When this occurs he is able to perfume many handkerchiefs, by simply wiping his hair. This manifestation occurs when the medium is ill, and comes to make him better.

Imperator controlled with difficulty on account of the illness of several in the circle.

He said: "We wish to say a few words in reference to the Theosophical questions which are occupying the medium's attention. Those who assail the knowledge of Spiritualists assail our very existence ; they cannot believe anything that we say, and there can be no accord between us and them. If the existence of the world of spirits is denied, the action of the human spirit cannot take its place ; as its action can only be studied in connection with the world of spirit ; hence we have insisted on its being a central point in the medium's creed. Moreover, you must recognise the fact that no development of the human spirit is possible except by and through influence from us ; the notion of its development by its own powers is a fallacy, as no spirit can act without the assistance of its guardians. Men prefer to spin fallacies for themselves, and few come to us for information. They are wise in their own conceit. We know nothing of what the Theosophists call an 'overshadowing soul,' unless it be the overshadowing of the guardians.

"The higher spirits who come to your earth are influences or emanations. They are not what you describe as persons, but emanations from higher spheres. You must learn to recognise the immortality of the higher messages. When we first appeared to this medium he insisted on our identifying ourselves to him. But many influences come through our name. Two or three stages after death, spirits lose much of what you regard as individuality, and become more like influences. I have now passed to the verge of the spheres from which it is possible to return to you and I can influence without any regard to distance. I am very distant from you now. Faith with you is more precious than diamonds and more rare. The Christ said truly that it would move mountains ; at all events it will enable you to subdue them. Faith as known in theology is a form of spiritual energy, and it is by virtue of this you win your salvation. May the blessing of the All-Wise remain with you."

Not by intellect may we know the Self of the universe, much less That of which the Self is but a fragmentary expression. Only in some moment of rarest and loftiest attainment, when some supreme renunciation of self has given for a moment the illusion of separateness, when the Soul is poised in silence, and a stillness beyond earth's quiet holds its very life in suspense, then, it may be, that through the stillness will come a faint thrill of something mightier than Soul at its strongest, greater than Soul at its tenderest, and the answering thrill from the deepest depths of our nature, sensed rather than felt, may resound us that our Spirit is one with the Spirit of the universe, and that some time, somewhere, we shall reach a vision impossible to-day.—Miss Bassett.

The or two points in the Rio Janeiro "Reformador," analysis of Signor Lombroso's theories regarding the phenomena associated with Madame Eusapia Palladino, will be seen below. In some respects the "Reformador" treats the task of analysis as an easy one, and thinks that even those who without personal experience, merely read with some degree of discriminating intelligence about mediumistic phenomena, must have been struck with the incoherence displayed in Signor Lombroso's explanations of what he saw, as printed in "L'Avant" of the 15th inst., and they could hardly fail to be surprised to find such a distinguished man building a flimsy a structure on so restricted an area of observed facts, as that within a few weeks of his conversion from a condition of blank ignorance with regard to them. It looks more like the essay of a clever young student who has just entered on a new study than the method of an experienced scientific investigator. He starts by affirming that all the great mediums we know, and, almost in the same branch, informs us that he personally had known only two in Italy. One of the clearest proofs of the limited scope of his observations is found in his adopted theory of the causes to which mediumistic writing may be assigned. He says that the mediums "are in a semi-somnambulic condition," and have "no consciousness of what they are doing, because of the preponderating action of the right hemisphere." Professor Lombroso makes it apparent that his knowledge of writing mediums is derived from sources beyond the circle of his own experience, and anyone acquainted with the evidence which has been accumulated concerning this phase of the subject will at once see that his statement is almost wholly contrary to fact. But even if were not so—even if it were true that all mediumistic writing is done in a condition of semi-somnambulism, it is not enough for Professor Lombroso merely to assert that the medium is himself the original source of the writing, just as it is not sufficient for him or for any other distinguished man merely to affirm that semi-somnambulism is a consequence of inactivity of the left cerebral hemisphere and a preponderating activity of the right, especially when we are also told that the preponderating activity of the right is compensatory of the inactivity of the left. If the preponderance is compensative why should there be any unconsciousness or somnambulism at all? In the present day the most illustrious representative of science may not enter the arena of discussion in relation to any branch of knowledge armed merely with an *avoir été*. Affirmation must be based on actual observation and experiment.

Another curious instance of apparent confusion of ideas may be found where the professor is dealing with the transmission of sense "due to hysteria, when, for example, the nose and the chin perceive, while, during some moments, all the other senses are paralysed. The cortical centre of vision which has its seat in the brain acquires such energy that it becomes a substitute for the eye." Physiological science has hitherto been unable to prove that the eye is neither more nor less than a mere optical apparatus which collects images according to physical laws in order to transmit them to the visual centre by means of the optic nerve, and it has also proved that the optic nerve is the only one capable of transmitting luminous impressions. It is also the only one which gives luminous sensations if excited artificially. The others, when peripherally excited, yield either sensations of pain, as in the case of the sensitive nerves, or no sensations at all, as in that of the chiasm. If, therefore, the professor wishes to maintain that images are transmitted by the nerves of the nose or the chin, he will have propounded one of the greatest of physiological absurdities. Further, if the centre of vision "substitutes itself for the eye," that means, in other words, that the visual centre is transformed into a receptive apparatus capable of fixing images, and that does not signify a merely functional modification or transformation of force, but a physical and organic transformation. How easy it is for illustrious scientists to fall into error, even in relation to departments of knowledge with which they are exhaustively familiar, when they are here on opposing something which they do not like!

When Professor Lombroso observed some facts wholly foreign to the ordinary sphere of his investigations, and started at the very beginning to construct a theory, or theories—for he has more than one—to account for them, he should have remembered the censures to which Professor Koch was subjected when, through external influence, he allowed himself to be so professed.

tate as to publish prematurely his discoveries in bacteriology. And, besides, the great Berlin experimentalist trod his own ground when he did so—ground familiar to him by constant and patient investigation. Signor Lombroso might have even remembered that a scientific man could follow with safety the course adopted by the London "Psychical Research Society," which, after years of investigation, has not yet seen fit to formulate a definite theory on the subject, but patiently keep on gathering their facts together so that the area of their observations and experiments may be widened to its utmost.

"POSSIBLE CONDITIONS OF THE FUTURE LIFE."

The Rev. M. J. Savage is always interesting, so the following which appears in the "Religio-Philosophical Journal," will be welcome to the readers of "LIGHT." We have not seen the sermon to which reference is made, so simply give the "Religio-Philosophical Journal's" account of it. The crudity of the observations is very striking:—

Rev. Minot J. Savage preached a sermon last April on "Possible Conditions of the Future Life," in which, with his characteristic vigour, he advanced some views in the line of Spiritualism and of interest to Spiritualists generally. He raised the questions: Where are the friends that we have "lost"? What kind of lives are they leading? What are they doing? Do they remember us? Are they interested in our personal experiences, our joys and sorrows? Are they able to help us? Is their happiness destroyed by knowing that we are not happy? Some, he remarked, in trying to answer the first question, have placed heaven or hell on this planet or star, or that. People have tried to think of some particular star, like Alcyone, that might be the centre of the universe and the heaven where the beatific vision might be attained. In his sermon, a printed copy of which is before us, Mr. Savage points out the fallacy of this. He says that he does not believe that our friends start on a journey which it takes them a thousand years to make before they get anywhere after they die. There is no reason to believe that they go away very far from this lovely old earth of ours. He quotes Milton:

Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.

He thinks that the spirit world wraps this planet of ours around like an atmosphere. Our friends are probably close beside us, or at least so near that they can come whenever they will. He is indisposed to dogmatise on this subject, but this seems reasonable to him. Why do we not see them? A thousand things exist that we do not see. It is but the smallest fragment of the reality of things that we ever see or hear. There must be a certain definite relation between the vibrations of the ether and the structure of the eye to enable one to see any particular thing. These vibrations may be so rapid or they may be so slow that we cannot see. The sun does not go out when we wink. The microscope on the one hand and the telescope on the other ought to teach us that but a little tiny fragment of the universe is visible to us.

Mr. Savage does not refer to the fourth dimension of space as being a possible explanation of the invisibility of spirits, but as a speculation this is allowable and is here suggested. In regard to the future condition of spirits, Mr. Savage does not think that the person who dies an ordinary individual is at once either an angel or a devil. He thinks he is subject to change as he is here. Mr. Savage says people have said to him over and over again that they could not for a moment believe that their friends were near enough to know what was going on here, because it would be impossible for them in that case to be happy. In reply to this, he says that he should have very little respect for one of his friends, if he thought he would prefer to be away off somewhere out of sight rather than be near and to sympathise and help. He does not, he says, want when he dies to go off into some Eden or palace and be surrounded with a nameless kind of bliss, never to know what his friends are going through here that he has left behind. He would rather be able to walk by their side, to know about them, to see what they are bearing, even if he could not help them, than be away off, with the thought that he could never hear from them and never could gain a glimpse as to what they were doing or how they were getting on. Mr. Savage urges that this life is only the beginning, a school-time, from which we graduate into eternal conditions, and if a friend has gone up into that life, and is able from a higher

level to look back and survey the experiences that we are going through, it seems only natural that he should estimate aright our sorrows and sufferings, and knowing that they are temporary and educational in their tendency, he would not feel so bad at seeing our suffering as those with a narrower range of thought. Such a one sees the conditions and experiences which are needful to fit us for what is coming. Mr. Savage says, "If I have any friends in the other world who are selfish enough to want to go off in a corner without any regard to the experiences I am passing through, I am perfectly willing that heaven should be destroyed. This seems to me irrational and puerile, this kind of conception of our friends and the other life." Mr. Savage holds that the mental soul-faculties are untouched by the experience called death, that these faculties develop a thousand, a million fold, as the ages go on, and find employment in science, art, philosophy, literature, music, in all these directions in which we have begun to train ourselves here. The civilisation here means but little compared with the possible, growing world, embracing civilisation of men and women who have passed through this life and entered upon the higher and grander life of the spirit.

Mr. Savage is deeply imbued with the idea that this life is simply a preparatory stage, that beyond there is opportunity for endless study and advance, that we shall find ourselves weak, helpless, in acute sorrow, according as we have lived and trained ourselves in the culture of mind and heart and soul here. The selfish man has the germ of generosity in him, but it takes time to bring it up and make it grow; but one great contrast between the hope as presented by Mr. Savage and that of the earlier faiths is, that he believes there is no dead line over which the soul cannot cross, but that there is a possibility of everyone working out his own salvation by his thinking and feeling, by his deeds and works, by his entire life. High or low, good or bad, we are making ourselves and fixing the conditions of the next stage of being.

THE SOUND OF A SUNBEAM.

One of the most wonderful discoveries in science that have been made within the last year or two is the fact that a beam of light produces sound. According to Milling, a beam of sunlight is thrown through a lens on a glass vessel that contains lampblack, coloured silk or worsted, or other substances. A disc, having slits or openings cut in it, is made to revolve swiftly in this beam of light so as to cut it up, thus making alternate flashes of light and shadow. On putting the ear to the glass vessel, strange sounds are heard so long as the flashing beam is falling on the vessel. Recently a more wonderful discovery has been made. A beam of sunlight is caused to pass through a prism, so as to produce what is called the solar spectrum or rainbow. The disc is turned and the coloured light of the rainbow is made to break through it. Now place the ear to the vessel containing the silk, wool or other material. As the coloured lights of the spectrum fall upon it, sounds will be given by different parts of the spectrum and there will be silence in other parts. For instance, if the vessel contains red worsted, and the green light flashes upon it, loud sounds will be given. Only feeble sounds will be heard if the red and blue parts of the rainbow fall upon the vessel, and other colours make no sound at all. Green silk gives sound best in red light. Every kind of material gives more or less sound in different colours and utters no sound in others.—"Electrical Review," New York, July 1st.

[This seems to require corroboration. Even if true it does not follow that we have the sound of a sunbeam. Such pseudo-poetic expressions are very misleading. We all remember how Sir W. Thomson (Lord Kelvin) took a pound of energy from Paris to Glasgow! —ED. "LIGHT."]

MR. C. PFOUNDES.

We have received a letter from Mr. Pfoundes, who is lecturing on Buddhism in Japan. He speaks hopefully of his mission, but does not paint the Christianity of Young Japan in rose coloured tints, though in the Far East there is setting in a strong reaction against the gross materialism which has infested the East as well as the West. Of the Buddhists Mr. Pfoundes speaks in the highest praise. Of the mission schools generally we have the usual deplorable tale. The pupils are alive to the advantages of education, and go to the schools, but in after life give up their temporary beliefs. Mr. Pfoundes was in Kiso when he wrote.

LIGHT.

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Light:

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REBUTTERS. Communications intended to be printed
will be addressed to the Editor, 3, Duke-street, Adelphi. It
will facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they
are under two columns in length. Long communications are
less in danger of being delayed, and are frequently
lost on account of want of space, though in other respects
good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space
of half a column to ensure insertion.

Lesser communications should in all cases be addressed to
Dr. B. D. Godfrey, 3, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., and not to
the Editor.

CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY.

It seems useless to continue the correspondence on the
above subject, for there is but little hope of a conclusion
being arrived at, the reason for which is not far to seek.
Whatever may have been said by the various writers about
internal and external development, or what not, the same
fundamental error underlies the whole, namely, that the
arguments are all worked out in terms of an existence
which probably, even most likely, has only a part in
common with any other. This condition must be insisted
on, for it is at the basis of the assertion that "these things
are only spiritually discerned."

Now what is meant by "immortality"? Continued
existence without dying. And what is "dying"? The
answer to the last question involves the answer to the former.
Dying, according to the Spiritualist, is the act of change
whereby the body is left and the inner but living principle
goes on; according to the Materialist it is the extinction of
individual existence. Now it seems that generally our
correspondents have used the Spiritualistic signification of
the term "death" when referring, either directly or by
implication, to the supposed end of our earthly life; and the
materialistic meaning when speaking of other stages of
existence. Immortality has been opposed to "annihilation"
in the one case, to "change" in the other. This confusion
could hardly have arisen if the probably different conditions
obtaining in other states had been recognised, for the
turning of something into nothing, the act of "annihilation,"
even in this our earthliness, does not mean what it
appears to mean, for what notion have we of "nothing,"
except as a change of conditions? Its figurative sense, in
which it is generally used, is misleading, for whenever it is
so used it means, as we have said, simply a change of conditions.
The annihilation of an army, for example, signifies
that most or even all the men who formed the army are
either killed or taken prisoners; the army as such no longer
exists, but its constituents do, whether they be dead or
alive. But this is not annihilation, not the absolute
"creation" of nothing where there was something. In
fact, talk as we may, we know nothing of annihilation.

And as we know nothing of annihilation, so we know
nothing of immortality; both to us are words. Unfortu-
nately, the theological notion of a future life is that of a
never ending one, but one conditioned very similarly to
this, with a little more singing, and a generally materialistic
happiness. This immortality, or never endingness, has
somehow got mixed up with Spiritualism; and whether it
be as it used to be in England, and as it still is very much
at Ossiet Bay and other parts of America, a looking forward
to an everlasting summerland, or to a hope of something
better but indescribable, the never ending of ourselves as
ourselves comes in as a matter of course.

Now what do we know of "ourselves"? Suppose we
could see, say, just over the violet end of the spectrum, as
the ants appear to do, the world would be entirely changed

for us, and what would this self, which is a self ~~happily~~,
dependent for its self hood on its environment, become
after all only to the lowest or physical self that is the
presentment of spirit in terms of what are called material
conditions—are we not constantly being brought face to face
with the fact of our personality being but a part of
greater individuality? And when we speak of "immor-
tality," do we mean the immortality of the person or of the
individual?

We are a little apt to think too much of our own
personal happiness; the desire even of so great a thing as
immortality, that is, personal immortality, involves a
certain amount of selfishness, a selfishness which is possibly
characteristic only of this earthly state of existence,
which aggregation and therefore personality is the type. If
those who think about the eternity of their being, of their
never-endingness, were to analyse their thoughts they
would probably find that what they so ardently desire is
continuance of themselves as they are, only without trouble,
with much happiness and in the possession of all that the
unequally balanced terrestrial ledger shows ought to belong
to them.

In the instalment of "The Records" by Mrs. S., published in this week's "Light," we find Imperator saying—
"The higher spirits who come to your earth are influences or emanations. They are not what you describe as persons, but emanations from the higher spheres. You must learn to recognise the impersonality of the higher messages." This is a very striking passage, as it indicates that the personality gets absorbed, and no longer remains as the unit, so that the longing for personal immortality is not a necessary desire on the part of those who wish to reach the loftier developments of spirituality.

The true hope of everlasting life is not the hope of a
personal everlastingness, but the hope of sharing the eternal
life, which means perhaps the getting nearer to, and the
absorption into, what we know as God, the generic name for
all that we can conceive of perfectness.

But even here we are confronted still with our
inadequate knowledge of the conditions that prevail in the
"onward" states of being, conditions which may conceivably
give quite a new significance to immortality, even if under
those conditions immortality were intelligible. Suppose,
for example, a state in which time is of two dimensions,
where past, present, and future are all one, what would
immortality mean then?

"THE LAW OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA".

IV.

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to take much further
notice of this book. Enough has been done to show that
Mr. Hudson's methods are so unsatisfactory, and his state-
ments of facts so inaccurate, as to preclude the admission of
any serious weight being given to his arguments. Mr.
Hudson is important, after his manner, when he comes to
the subject of Psycho-Therapeutics. He finds six different
psychic methods of healing the sick to be "now in vogue."
And this is what he says of the one which he labels
"Christian Science":—

This method of healing rests upon the assumption of the
unreality of matter. This assumed as a major premise, it
follows that our bodies are unreal, and, consequently, there is
no such thing as disease, the latter existing only in the mind,
which is the only real thing in existence.

And, as if to clinch the argument, he goes on:—

This system is based upon the assumption that matter has
no real existence, consequently we have no bodies, and hence
no dimension of the body is possible. It is not known whether

* "The Law of Psychic Phenomena: a Working Hypothesis for the
Systematic Study of Hypnotism, Spiritualism, &c." By THOMAS J. H.
Hudson. (London: G. E. Putnam's Sons.)

the worthy lady founder of the school ever stopped to reduce her foundation principles to the form of a syllogism. It is presumed not, for otherwise their intense, monumental, and aggressive absurdity would have become as apparent to her as it is to others.

Mr. Hudson then favours us with the syllogism:—

Matter has no existence. Our bodies are composed of matter. Therefore our bodies have no existence.

Now, Mr. Hudson does not see that the minor premise is his own. The assertion that matter has no existence precludes the assertion contained in the minor premise. Of course if the minor premise be allowed the absurdity would be monumental, but those who say that "matter" is only a presentment of "spirit," are not likely to be so patently idiotic as to deny its existence as matter, and then immediately to assert of something that it is composed of matter. Mr. Hudson's pretty syllogism is, therefore, of no value, and it is he rather than the Christian Scientists who is guilty of an "intense, monumental, and aggressive absurdity," an absurdity which is heightened by the meretricious cleverness of the remark: "It follows, of course, that disease cannot exist in a non-existent body." That because matter is in itself unreal our bodies are, therefore, also unreal, is only evidence that Mr. Hudson does not understand the meaning of the word "real."

This method of Mr. Hudson's, namely, putting the arguments he is supposed to use into a syllogistic form, is a favourite one of his, and shows how well he himself understands the art of suggestion. The syllogism looks so well, and seems so admirably to round off the argument that the inconsiderate reader forgets to question the premises, which are generally merely assertions of the writer's own opinions.

We now come to this psychologist's investigation of the phenomena of "Spiritism." And here, being quite unable to account for the physical phenomena, Mr. Hudson boldly assumes that they "must" be brought about by the medium. To do this, however, he makes use of another artifice which is somewhat common with him, that is, that when he finds his two propositions about the objective and subjective minds are not sufficient to cover the ground, he in the most artless way slides in what he calls a subsidiary proposition. In this case the "subsidiary" is as follows: "The subjective mind, or entity, possesses physical power; that is, the power to make itself heard and felt, and to move ponderable objects." Now, on p. 29 it is asserted of the objective mind that "it takes cognisance of the objective world. Its media of observation are the five physical senses. It is the outgrowth of man's physical necessities. It is his guide in his struggle with his material environment," while of the subjective mind it is stated that "it takes cognisance of its environment by means independent of the physical senses. It perceives by intuition," and so on, as already quoted in a previous article. In fact, the objective mind has to do with the physical environment of humanity, while the subjective has not. Nevertheless, in spite of this, the author of this amazing book calmly introduces a new proposition which he calls "subsidiary," but which is in reality nothing but a contradiction of the second, but which second is strangely whittled down just before the introduction of this new proposition into "the subjective mind is constantly controlled by suggestion"; not a word about any other of its assumed characteristics. This is not quite complimentary to Mr. Hudson's readers.

Of any "fact" to support this assumption as to the subjective mind, not one is given. The phenomena are allowed, and the spirits of the departed being "out of it," according to Mr. Hudson, why, of course, it must be the medium's subjective mind that does it all. Goodwin Sands and Tenterden steeple once again!

The incipient student of mathematics in the days of his innocence is apt to gloss over an uncomfortable hiatus in his reasoning with the phrase, "And it is clear." This

does not deceive the wary examiner. The corresponding phrase, much affected by Mr. Hudson, is, "it is well known." So we find that "it is well-known that anyone can as readily obtain a communication from an imaginary person as from a real one, from a living person as from the dead, providing the medium does not happen to know the facts." We were of opinion that Mr. Stead's experiences were unique. The explanation of the answers given by mediums is also instructive. "The subjective mind of the medium, being controlled by suggestion, believes itself to be the spirit of any deceased person whose name is suggested." There is the natural difficulty to be overcome of no suggestion having been made—the deceased person's name and personality not being known to the medium or anyone present; but Mr. Hudson has a very short way with this objection. He simply says he does not believe any such case ever happened. "On the whole," says he, "it may be safely assumed that no medium has ever yet been able to impart any information that is not known either to the medium or to some living person with whom he is *en rapport*."

But of clap-trap logic there is no end. The following is another specimen:—

We have the authority of the Spiritists themselves for formulating the proposition that the more completely the spirit of a man is "disengaged from material influence," the less power he possesses to produce physical phenomena. This being true, it follows that the converse of the proposition is true, namely, that the more completely the spirit of a man is united to material elements, the greater is his power to produce such phenomena.

So we are, after all, right in saying that because every man is an animal, therefore every animal is a man. The converse may be true in the case cited, but it does not follow from the direct proposition.

As to materialisation we find that "it seems to be well established," a variant of "it is well-known," "that some persons have the power, not only to create phantasms perceptible to the objective senses of others, but to endow them with a certain degree of intelligence and power." It is airily said that the Orientals call this the "projection of the astral body," and seeing that all the mediums, witches, Orientals, and others, go to sleep during the projection, and that this is the hypnotic sleep, and that the hypnotic sleep mixes up the subjective with the objective mind, why it follows quite naturally that materialisations are the outcome of the medium's subjective mind. It is curious to note, though, that while on p. 286 it is stated that undoubtedly "certain impalpable shapes, resembling persons deceased, do from time to time appear to the living," yet these images are asserted on p. 289 to be sometimes "even tangible." There would appear to the ordinary person some difference between the two kinds of phantasms, a difference requiring explanation, but such trifles do not trouble Mr. Hudson.

We have taken more notice of this book than it deserves, because from the plausibility with which the argument "appears" to be carried on, some people have thought that the existence of disembodied intelligences who are able to communicate with men still in the flesh has been disproved. This has certainly not been done by Mr. Hudson. Nevertheless, it must be understood that we are as yet only on the threshold of knowledge as to the powers inherent, but as yet undeveloped, in man. Many phenomena at one time thought to be producible only by intelligence untrammelled by an earthly body are undoubtedly now known to be brought about by unexpected mental activities, but this is a very different thing from asserting that all phenomena are to be explained, even provisionally, by means of an empirical and ill-defined law.

THE NEW SUPERSTITION.

In that affected style which is part of its own superstition, the "National Observer," for July 22nd, treats of the new interest in Occult matters :—

A while ago the heart was stirred by the tidings of a new era drawing upon humanity. The sun of Modern Science rose in novel splendour upon the world, and the Children of Light hailed his advent with a chorus of prophetic triumph. They discovered a magic in his beams of secret virtue, whereby the heavens and the earth should be made new. The mists of mediæval ignorance should vanish utterly, and the twilight wherein imagination had loved to revel, peopling it with strange and lovely forms, be for ever dispersed. In the clear radiance of positive knowledge, Fancy (deceiving elf) and all her faery train should find no home nor refuge. The reign of Reason and triumph of the Critical Method were proclaimed with flourishings of learned trumpets, and the sweet irrationality of Belief was sternly taken from us. We bowed submissive to the iron laws of Evidence and Logic, and barricaded the gates of Horn and Ivory alike with the whole apparatus of a Positive Philosophy. Truth—naked, scientific, demonstrable Truth—was throned high in tyrannic majesty above all the gods. Her and her alone were we to serve. The Ages of Faith were over : the Age of Science had dawned, and the old Python of Superstition was to meet a speedy and final doom by the shafts of the new Sun-God.

The time has come, and what of the event? The Age of Science is established in all its majesty. The outward and visible signs of its presence are patent everywhere beyond mistake. The electric light converts our drawing-rooms into the radiant similitude of gin-palaces. From the Board School to the University our system of education has been remodelled. Our girls' fingers are brown with nitric acid, their lips eloquent with the phrases of the handbook and the lecture room. The magic catchwords of "development," "environment," "differentiation" and the like are upon every tongue ; and whatever the subject of your discourse you must sprinkle it plentifully therewith, on pain of being despised for an ignoramus or a reactionary. These are signs unmistakable. The Age of Science is here, and we are duly grateful for its blessings. But what of the chief blessing of all promised in its name : the extinction of Superstition? Is there anything to give us hope of this consummation? Can any deny that superstition flourishes among us to-day more vigorously than ever? It would seem indeed to have taken out a new lease of life. If the Old Superstition has disappeared it is only to be replaced by the New, and the exchange is scarce for the better.

The article then goes on to talk about the *credo quia impossibile* of Tertullian, as showing more real insight than all the positive philosophers, and says with some point, if you rob man of "Jonah's whale, he will take unto himself Madame Blavatsky's Mahatmas," and then pleasantly continues :—

Our attempt at scepticism has exhausted us, and we have collapsed into the extreme of credulity. The charlatan is the hero of the hour, and no absurdity is too absurd to be accepted, provided only that it be varnished over with a coat of pseudo-scientific phraseology. The cast rags of science perform the office performed in the old days by the cast rags of religion, but the under-lying illusions remain the same. Hypnotism is but witchcraft writ scientifically, with the unknown quantity called by a different name. "Devil" or "ethereal medium"—what matters which you choose, so long as you are equally ignorant of what it really is? There is no informing magic in a name ; nor by adding syllable to syllable can you increase knowledge, though you may disguise your ignorance from the more ignorant. Theosophy, Spiritualism, Palmistry, Phrenology, and all the other acolytes of the New Superstition, are wearily antique, despite their affectation of scientific novelty ; and they who affect to be most "advanced" are ever the readiest to fall victims. You, my dear madam, who pride yourself upon your emancipation from antiquated prejudice, and laugh to scorn the simple maiden who believes in the miracles of the New Testament, will accept with reverential awe the messages delivered through a London ceiling from the sages of Thibet ; will sit breathless, with changing colour, as the fashionable cheiromancer bends over your hand in my lady's drawing-room. And you, my good sir, for all your gravity and grey hairs, are you one whit less credulous than

she, when you listen, without a smile, to the "further revelations of Mrs. Potts," and mumble with learned affectation the blessed words of "telepathy," "clairvoyance," and "sub-consciousness"?

Now, if the "National Observer" writer would only give us a clear idea of what superstition really is, we might understand him. But it would, doubtless, try the mental and physical fibre of this "decadent" too much to tell us.

WIT OR HUMOUR—OR NEITHER?

The "Daily Telegraph" makes "merry" over the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research in this light-hearted way :—

Ghosts, or, to call them by their new scientific name, "spooks," are not exempt from injustice any more than other people who have not yet attained to that dignity. The new number of the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research contains a very glaring instance of spookical theft. On Sunday morning two psychics noticed in church a spook making signs that he wished to communicate with them in the evening, so after an early dinner the psychics sat down at half past six o'clock to the rapping-table, and had an interview with him. He said he had been injured in a railway accident at Loughborough Junction, and was lying in St. Thomas's Hospital unconscious. Afterwards the, apparently, same shade appeared to them in a state of some excitement, and partly by raps and partly *vis à vis* told them a tale of unparalleled villainy. "I am the real man who was injured," he cried ; "this is me, and not the other one. My body was entered into by another. I am now bodiless. Do you not understand?" In other words the spook explained that a second spook had stolen his body while he lay unconscious in the hospital, and that now when the real Simon, had recovered and wished to regain possession of his usual corporeal habitation he found himself coolly evicted. He must either remain without a body, or consent to accept the position of a co-lodger with the other—a contingency which he seemed to think a great injustice. The Psychical Researchers were unable to help him in the matter. It seems from the evidence of impartial rappers that many spooks are irreclaimable liars, and often say exactly the opposite of what they mean. Perhaps the Loughborough accident man belongs to that class.

Yes, some spooks are "irreclaimable liars," but then they are the "spooks" of mortal men, not long gone over. Some day we may come across the "spook" of a newspaper man, and then ——!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the sake of presenting views that may elicit discussion.]

An "Occult" Lexicon.

SIR,—Is it not desirable that a lexicon should be carefully compiled giving precise definition of all terms connected with Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research? A work of this sort would be of great use to students of Psychical phenomena : and I would suggest that its value would be enhanced if it had an appendix, giving, separately, the well-weighed answers of a few competent writers to this question : Under what conditions may it be held to be absolutely proved that any communication by rap, writing, music, voice, or photography proceeds from or is influenced by a spirit disincarnate? J. HAWKINS SIMPSON.

Exoteric and Esoteric Catholicism.

SIR,—I am a priest of the Catholic Church, and I affirm that the Divine Feminine is the esoteric teaching of the Church, and no one can read her books of devotion without seeing it. "Catholic Born and Bred in Spain" is perfectly right, and I can also tell Mr. Barry that I have had it from high authority that the only reason the dogma of the "Assumption of Our Lady" is not defined is that it has never been impugned or seriously controverted. The Divinity of Jesus and the Divinity of Mary must stand or fall together. "Joseph, Mary, and Jesus" are the earthly reflection of the Eternal Trinity of Father and Mother and the ever proceeding Christ, the Holy Child.

A CATHOLIC PRIEST.

Spiritualism in Melbourne.

SIR.—For the past two years I have had "LIGHT" sent to me, during which time I have noted very little colonial news therein, and knowing that you receive from Melbourne the "Harbinger of Light," which rarely contains local news, I thought you would not be displeased at my writing you a few lines concerning Spiritualism in Melbourne.

If you were here you would pity those people calling themselves Spiritists. In the first place, there is no unity, and secondly, out of a fairly large number of mediums we have only one in all Melbourne capable of conducting a trance and test-séance.

Some three weeks back we had a visit from two American tricksters named Steen, who called Spiritualism, its believers, mediums, and all connected with it, pure and unadulterated frauds. The Steens began by scattering £1,000 challenges broadcast that no medium or artist could do anything but what they could duplicate. A Mrs. Rising, the only genuine trance and test medium in Melbourne, took up the challenge. Steen then backed down to £20, and hedged that so about with conditions, sneers, and innuendoes that Mrs. Rising could not possibly meet him, but offered to allow him to visit her private circle, as you will see by the letters. We have here a male so-called medium, and plenty of female ditto, yet not one came to the front to defend the cause, and Mrs. Rising was left to stand alone, which has caused amongst investigators and Spiritists a great feeling of distrust and unmixed contempt for those who weekly advertise themselves as trance and test mediums and yet had not sufficient faith in their powers to test them in the cause of Spiritualism and truth.

I have taken the liberty of sending you, under separate cover, cuttings from the "Melbourne Evening Standard," showing the correspondence concerning Steen's challenge, by which you will perceive that the great professor is anything but a gentleman. I have also sent copies of the "Prahran Telegraph," whose special is now giving his experiences amongst the mediums of Melbourne. I will send you the paper until the series of articles is finished. "LIGHT" comes to me truly as a gleam of sunshine through a thunder-cloud, and the pleasure my friends and myself derive from its perusal is my apology for thus troubling you.

Melbourne, June 5th, 1893.

W. J. STOCKER.

[We have duly received the papers referred to, and are grateful to our correspondent. Let us hope for better things in the near future.—ED. "LIGHT."]

Botany v. Theosophy.

SIR,—One of your correspondents pointed out recently the absurdity of Madame Blavatsky's theory concerning the pineal gland, and her contemptuous disregard of anatomical facts. Her "superior knowledge" led her also to endorse triumphantly a foolish statement by the missionary Huc concerning "the tree of ten thousand images," which grows in the land of the Mahatmas, and bears, we are told, sacred texts ingrained in its magic leaves.

Those who appreciate the efforts made by the Mahatmas to spread such transcendent teachings in this benighted country, might show their gratitude by presenting the Masters with a few very elementary text-books of "Western Science," such as "The Young Collector," "British Fungi and Lichens," by E. M. Holmes, F.L.S., F.R.M.S., and Peter Gray, A.B.S., where the following passage is to be found, in the classification of lichens:—

"Tribe 16. Graphidei contains the genera: Xylographa, Ptychographa, Lithographa, Platygrapha, Graphis, Glyphis, etc., many species of which bear a striking resemblance to Hebrew or Chinese writing. Several are not uncommon in this country; one, a very handsome one (*Graphis elegans*), often spreads its mystic characters over the smooth bark of the holly. With us they grow mostly on the bark of trees. In hot climates, like many other lichens, they are found on their leaves. It was an epiphyllous species which struck with astonishment the Lazarist monks, Huc and Gabet, who, in the record of their journey to the capital of the Grand Lama, give a description of a marvellous tree they encountered near the town of Kouniboum, in Tibet, denominated by the natives 'the tree of ten thousand images.' 'Our eyes,' say the travellers (on entering the enclosure in which it stands), 'were directed with the utmost curiosity to the leaves, and we were filled with an absolute consternation of astonishment at finding that, in point of fact, there were upon the leaves, well-formed Tibetan characters, all of a green colour, some darker, some lighter than the tree itself.'

Naturally they at once suspected a pious fraud on the part of the Buddhist Bonzes, but after a minute examination of every detail, they failed to discover 'the least deception.' And no wonder, for the mysterious scroll was nature's own handwriting, being simply the libellus of a leaf-borne lichen of the Graphidean tribe."

J. L.

Concerning Analogy and Proof.

SIR.—The article of "C.C.M." in your issue of July 16th deals with considerations which, in the opinion of the writer, demonstrate the acceptability of the theory of Re-incarnation.

Usually the only reason given for such acceptance is that, if we accept provisionally this theory, it becomes demonstrated in process of time by our remembering our own re-incarnations. That is to say, after the mind has become enfeebled in this direction by entertaining an unprovable hypothesis (which it ought never to do), then it is in a fit state to have visions in harmony therewith.

"C.C.M." appears to adopt a more reasonable method. He wishes us to infer the reasonableness of re-incarnation by the analogy of sleep and the diminished activity of vegetable life at night and in winter. Now, no doubt, vegetable and animal life do, in our ordinary experience, appear to require periods of rest; but what is the general law governing these two kinds of apparent rest? Many think that the plant rests entirely in the night; but evidence demonstrates that all its powers, except those requiring light for their exercise, are as active in the night as in the day; and in winter, while most plants do not actively show growth above ground, they do continue to grow so far as their roots are concerned; and it is reasonable to assume that from these roots energy is conveyed to maintain what remains alive above ground.

Again, the same plants that apparently rest for four or five months in the year in this country grow above ground during the whole year when transplanted to warmer climates. Mr. Bessemer kept a greenhouse at an equable temperature, and supplied it at night with the brilliant rays of the electric arc light, and demonstrated, once for all, that active growth in plant life could go on day and night and year after year without intermission, and without the slightest sign of evil effect from this unresting activity. It is the darkness, apparently, that is the cause of the very partial rest that plants take, not any necessity in their natures requiring it.

There is very little analogy between the repose of man and that of the vegetable kingdom. Man needs rest, and usually rests his body at night, although he can, and frequently does, rest in the daytime. His resting, like that of the plant, is not absolutely dependent upon darkness for its cause. He can rest at any time he needs to. Then he does not rest in the winter as plants do here. The production of young plants does not take place in the winter. Human beings are born all the year round, and more often during the night than the day.

Then as to the rest at death. What becomes of the plant when it dies? We really do not know, however learnedly we may talk of protoplasm and such terms that cast a shade over our deep and almost all-pervading ignorance. If we knew that the plant, after living an active life, say as a cauliflower, re-incarnated the next time, say as a wild rose, then there would be some slight analogy to depend on; although even then we should be troubled by the great differences as to resting between man and the vegetable, which entirely defeat all attempts to discover the general law underlying both.

When man rests in sleep the body, with its senses, is alone inactive, and we wake to a consciousness of the same conditions and circumstances that we perceived before resting. At death we awake after a short period to another consciousness, in nearly all respects differing from the old, requiring very little rest, and certainly not requiring a long period of over a thousand years of passivity. If we have learned anything from spirit-communion it is that not one of the best observers or seers has intimated that any of the departed urged the necessity of continuous rest for themselves. There is entire absence of proof or even respectable analogy on this point. If it does anything, reasoning from analogy and the existence of a universal law would lead us to the conclusion that, as the body perishes after death, so must the soul and spirit; but we know this is not the case.

No doubt there is some universal law that governs both this and the realm of spirit, but we are far too ignorant of nature's laws to infer much by analogy concerning the state after death. If there is any analogy helpful to us in this matter, it is that

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as the child requires most sleep, the youth less, the middle-aged less still, and the old man or woman least of all; so we progress however till life becomes a ceaseless activity, and a constant advance from one state of consciousness to a higher without any return to old conditions; the only rest ultimately necessary being a change of employment. Again, judging by analogy from the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, as advance is made rest becomes shorter.

Look at the undemonstrative animal kingdom—a continuous rest! See the vegetable resting about two-thirds of its existence. Observe that man rests only one-third of his. But whenever periods of rest man requires he gets, and we need not look upon him as spiritually worn out and needing a lengthened repose for his spiritual nature. The body requires rest, but if, as most spiritualists allege, the spirit is part of the universal Spirit of God, it cannot really rest at all either in sleep or at death, because immortality would necessarily bring about universal destruction.

I cannot say I think the accouche of Re-incarnationists is a wise or philosophical one. They always seem to infer that numbered in their doctrine arises from some narrow view on the part of the objector, as in this case; but in reality most thoughtful Spiritualists have pondered over all the analogies referred to by Madame Blavatsky, Mrs. Besant, "C.C.M." and others long before these persons suggested them, and have come to quite different conclusions. They feel that the narrowness is more connected with the acceptance than with the rejection of theories alike condemned by reason and "analogy."

Re-incarnation ministers a peculiar fascination to that kind of conservative mind which always believes that real wisdom and inspiration must come from the past ages of the world, and which is afraid to trust the real inspiration for them—namely, that of the present day and hour.

R. DONALDSON.

Six.—May I be allowed to ask "C. C. M." to favour us by developing somewhat more clearly what he implies by the following passage in his interesting letter under above title:—"Spiritual progress in the 'discrete degrees' consists in higher integration, whereby the unit of a lower order becomes by surrender of self-centredness, or separate will, identified with and functionally participant in a more universal life, just as it had before established its own integral individuality by natural subjection of the substances which composed it and which it continually assimilated, and which assumed functions in its organic life."

Are not the various principles into which man's consciousness may for convenience be distinguished, concretia interpenetrating, and indivisible? The universal consciousness particularises itself in man for self-realisation, but its particularisations remain inseparable from the ground-of-being, which is ever present in self-reference, or experience. What therefore is implied by discrete degrees?

Comments.

Conditional Immortality.

Six.—The letters of your correspondents "T. L. Henry" and "Isabel de Steiger" are very interesting. The difference between the views of these correspondents on the subject of immortality seems to be this, while the former looks upon immortality as the indefinite prolongation after physical death of the present order of life on the condition of continuance in wallowing, the latter looks upon it as a different order of life altogether, to be attained once for all while we are in the flesh. The point on which they both seem to agree is that all men will not inherit eternal life.

There is, one would imagine, in the heart of every man the consciousness of the possibility of a serene and noble life, infinitely removed from the basile, littleness, and degradation of this surface existence. To me this higher life seems to be within—the life of the inward man who looks on calm and unmoved at the perturbations of the outer. The problem is how to get this inward life to absorb the whole being. Immortality in the outer being seems not only impossible but undesirable, while the attainment of the entire man to the inward life seems to be only possible by cessation of life in the outer man; and how this is to be accomplished, whether by fulfilling the impulses of the outer life and thereby exhausting it, or by a process of mortification, is not quite evident. Perhaps the end may be attained by a courageous persistence in either course.

I find it impossible to believe—ancient scriptures, for which I have much respect, notwithstanding—that all men, and other

animals too for that matter, will not ultimately attain an eternal life; first, because I can see no possible reason native to eternal life, and next, because the mind requires an adequate reason for existence, and eternal life seems to be only adequate reason for the existence and subsistence of man.

I quite agree with your correspondents that the modern denotations of religion need awakening. There is so little the religious ideal has been explained away and vulgarised down to consider as little as possible with worldly interests. Men are women go to church on Sunday, not in a responsible but hasty moral manner, live the ordinary snug, solid, conventional life, and actually believe that in so doing they have attained the Christ-life; truly, this is ridiculous enough to be laughed were it not too sad and serious for laughter.

I am inclined to think, however, that this has more to do in Christian countries rather because the Formula of Christianity has been considered more as a type of the human nature of God than as a type of the divine nature of man; and so it has often been thought not only impossible to lead a good life as God is but absurd and even presumptuous to desire to do so; than your correspondents seem to hold—because we have learned to believe in the ultimate attainment of all to eternal life.

ADDM.

Six.—Just a few concluding words in reply to Mr. Bay's last letter with extract from Dr. Peacock's book.

As regards two Scripture texts quoted by Dr. Peacock—"Be ye holy," and "Be ye perfect," the first is not in the Gospels as he says, but is a quotation from the Old Testament; I. Peter i. 17, and in the Revised Version is not a command but a promise, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." So in the words of Christ in Matt. v. 48, the Revised Version reads "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Father is perfect." A command men to be holy and perfect in this present sin, God is holy and perfect, would be more natural than a command a newly-born infant to rise up a full grown man.

I am glad that Dr. Peacock recognises the solidarity of a race, and that the law of life is "all for each and each for all." But how will this law apply to the many or the few who become extinct? Will neither the pity of their human brethren, nor even the infinite love of their Father suffice their salvation? And when there comes that blessed promised time, in which, as Dr. Peacock says, "all from the least to the greatest shall comprehend religious truth," for the law of the Lord shall be written in their hearts, may we not regret that many destined to become extinct had been too early to share in the light and immortality of the present day!

Seeing that we do not choose when, where, or under what circumstances we shall enter into this world, or what kind of opportunities we shall have to attain to conditions of immortal life before leaving it, our so-called "free-will," and we know and are made free by the truth, is such a very limited and imperfect thing that who that considers aright would not rather have his ultimate destiny determined by the universal All-powerful will of the Father, than by his own infatuate individual will.

Whether belief in the inherent immortality of other animals than man necessarily follows from faith in man's immortality son of God, or not, I do believe in the necessary immortality of all animate creation. In man I believe is to be found a synthesis of all life, and in his attainment of perfection all lower forms of life will be discerned as elements of his reconstructed and purified in a perfected whole, so that

Not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God has made the pile complete.

Six v. Knowledge.

Six.—In a note at the end of my last letter you ask "What is sin?" I reply—being willingly that which you believe to be wrong. St. John tells us that "all unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death." I think my definition applies equally to the words "sin" and "unrighteousness." You make the remark, "Does not that which I have written involve a knowledge of the difference between absolute right and absolute wrong?" If the above definition of "sin" is correct, such knowledge is not necessary, I take it. You then add, "What danger of forgeting the scientific aspect of this question?" not this objection met by my statement that "absolute knowledge highest good can last for ever," and that "concluded knowledge if true, depends upon continual well doing."

thing of an emotional nature in these statements. Science can hardly demand absolute proof of immortality, such being impossible from its very nature; we cannot outlive eternity. The gaining of immortality must be an eternal work, to my thinking; but that of annihilation cannot possibly be so, for otherwise it could not happen; and an eternity of evil I cannot conceive of, unless the orthodox Hell be true, which I cannot believe either. I think Paul stated a scientific fact, although incapable of absolute proof from its very nature, when he told his Roman converts that "the wages of sin"—as defined above—"is death": death of the body, which science does believe in; and death also of the soul, if such there be, and it persists in wilfully doing that which is contrary to Divine Law; but, as Paul also told them, "the gift of God is eternal life" to those who live in obedience to His laws; and this is my definition of "absolute right and absolute wrong," as far as I understand it; at the same time I doubt if there is such a thing as absolute right and wrong for human beings in our present state. That which a man believes to be right is absolute right to him at that particular time, but should increase of knowledge cause him to alter his opinion, it would be so no longer. Paul said, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." That chapter is full of wisdom, to my thinking. T. L. HENLY.

Of Some Misunderstandings.

SIR,—With the common intellectual attitude of the earnest inquirer, "What does Dr. So-and-So say?" in regard to obscure subjects of discussion, I believe myself to be in intelligent sympathy. When, for instance, an agnostic thinker on the question of individual immortality seeks for help from the published thought of representative men—say of Tennyson or Darwin, Whitman or Ingersoll, Spencer or Ruskin, Berkeley or Hume, Emerson, Spinoza, Kant or Hegel, or any other of their peers, ancient and modern, his action is natural, and may ultimate in great good.

But whether the inquirer may best attain the highest point of spiritual view at the time accessible to him, directly through the golden gate of his own individuality, or by the avenues of external authorities, is practically dependent on his own constitution and development—primarily, in respect of his own faculties of perception and reception of truth, and, secondarily, in regard to his powers of comprehension of the corresponding faculties of other minds vested with "authority." For, as the varying complexion of faculty, with total environment, so, in a general sense, is necessarily the possibility of comprehension and utterance of truth.

Given a fairly typical mind, fairly self-knowing, and a corresponding knowledge of any other mind, with like knowledge of this mind's total environment (education, experience, circumstances, &c.), it would be as practicable to deduce its relations to fundamental truths in general as to work out a given mechanical problem in the composition of forces. Of course such hypothetical conditions are at present unrealisable, but, if the validity of the reasoning be admitted, the direct way to very practical issues is clear. As are the form and impressibility of the mind (the entire intelligence), so will be, in a general sense, the form of that mind's thought.

Does not every kind of germ, every variety of living organism, attract to itself from the seen and the unseen only that, in kind and degree, which it can assimilate and build up into its own being? And is it rationally possible to conceive of the truth-attracting-and-assimilating powers of the mind (loving intelligence) as under laws differing in kind? It is as natural (and right) for certain minds to be sceptical on some matters as for others to cherish belief in the same.

Is the foregoing "mere assertion"? If so, then it would likewise be mere assertion to affirm that the less cannot comprehend the greater, or that the greater includes the less. Now, as in the time of the Greek sage, Solon, it is wholly true that the fundamental essential to the seeker after truth is pointed to in the aphorism: "Know thyself." According to which principles it comes that, for me, the teaching of Mrs. Besant is peculiarly disqualified.

Coming to differences between ourselves, I repeat your question: "How do I know that the same principles of attraction and association govern all attachments everywhere?" Simply through healthy use of normal faculties—just as I know anything else, and as indicated by our valued "C.C.M." in his last excellent article "Concerning Analogy and Proof."

But let me remark that your objection, "assertion again," was anticipated. Also allow me to remind you that I said, "for

my part it is as easy to understand the one special order of attachments as the others." Perceiving the opening for a charge of "mere assertion," and finding myself obliged to risk the imputation, or extend my letter far beyond the regulation limits, I chose the horn of the dilemma on which I am comfortably seated.

It is with satisfaction I read that "what was intended by the note was that attachments which are made apparent here are the presentations, under present conditions, of some affinities existent in anterior states." As you add, that "does not necessitate, nor does it deny Re-incarnation"—but it should mean something thinkable. If, then, these affinities existent in anterior states are not "the Egos we have loved in past earth-lives and dwelt with in Devachan," what, may I ask, are they conceived to have been or be?

Moreover, if "there come welling up out of an indefinite past to some hazy recollections of things lost which are being partially restored, and these come neither from Devachan nor the Higher Self," could they not be, if imperfectly, represented in thought? If these things enter consciousness at all, it does seem that they must be susceptible of some kind of intelligible presentation; and if they are too hazy for this, how is it known what they are and whence they come or do not come?

"To ask for more light on such a subject is to ask for illumination where none can be given," you say—but why? Is it because there is no illuminant, nothing real to illuminate, or no objective percipient? Let us, if possible, see clearly, and at all costs speak plainly.

In conclusion, may I inquire how you positively know that to make such a request as the above is "to demand the perfection that comes through suffering without experiencing the pain"? Is not that something very like "mere assertion"?

In thus replying to your notes on my former letter, pray believe me that my motive is untainted of mere personality, but is simply from love of Light or Truth. W. B. P.

[If one thing has been insisted on more than another in "LIGHT," it is that "intuition" is one of the most important ways in which knowledge can be imparted. We cannot teach our correspondent how to get at this intuition. "Perfection through suffering" is the motto of all those who wish to attain to the higher life. This, so far, our correspondent does not seem to understand.—ED. "LIGHT."]

Exoteric and Esoteric Catholicism.

SIR,—When I read the letter of "Y. Z." under this heading in the issue of June 24th last, it appeared to me, as I stated in my last letter, published in the issue of July 8th, that he was making an effort to deceive the readers of "LIGHT" as to matters of fact. I read (and in my opinion justly read) between the lines of "Y. Z.'s" letter: (1) That there was an esoteric side of the Roman Catholic Church, into which candidates were initiated. (2) That the Roman Catholic Church (not only the esoteric section but the uninitiated also) holds, and has always held, that the Blessed Virgin represents the Motherhood of God. (3) That these things to a Roman "Catholic" seem so natural as to require no explanation."

Under the impression that these were distinct untruths, and a deliberate attempt to represent, to those who knew no better, that the Church of Rome had ever kept alive the gnostic teachings concerning religion (where "Y. Z." himself seems to admit that these spiritual truths of religion are alone to be found) by means of a circle of initiates of Romanism; in fact, that the ecclesiastical body which before all others has gained disgrace by its persecutions of heretics, has nevertheless strenuously preserved in a secret organisation of initiates the truths held by the very heretics she was murdering; and further, that the existence of this secret circle, and some general idea of its doctrines, were known outside, and seemed "so natural as to require no explanation"; I took steps to verify these assertions.

To which end I consulted some of my friends who belong to the Roman Church, but without success. I then decided to apply to the highest authority I could get at, and wrote to Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, putting two points before him, and informing him that they sprang out of a controversy, and I might want to print his answer. The points were: (a) "Is it true that there is an esoteric side of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church?" and (b) Is it true that the Church holds, and has ever held, that the Blessed Virgin represents the Motherhood of God?"

The following is a copy of the Cardinal's answer :—

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

June 26th, 1893.

SIR,—“Y.Z.” cannot be an instructed Catholic; probably he is not one at all.

The Catholic Church has no esoteric doctrine. Her whole teaching is accessible to all the world in her published books; and there are no private books, and no private teaching.

The Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God, but she is not a Deity, nor part of a Deity; she is a pure creature, and the notion of a feminine nature in God is simply Asiatic, and foreign to the teaching of the Catholic Church.—Yours,

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN.

In “LIGHT” for July 8th, I challenged “Y.Z.” to substantiate his statements, and that challenge he has, in his letter of July 22nd, carefully avoided. I can only presume that my former opinion of them is true, and being backed up in them by the above-mentioned authority, I think I am justified in believing “Y.Z.” is guilty of misrepresentation, to use no stronger term.

In answer to certain points in “Y.Z.’s” letters, and in that of “A Catholic Born and Bred in Spain,” in “LIGHT” for July 15th, I may as well state that while I do not admit of the existence of an esoteric side of Romanism, or of any other Christian sect that has crystallised into an ecclesiastical system, I do most strongly hold and believe in the esoteric aspect of the religion of Christ (the Anointed) as the common basis of all true religion, no matter whether it is called Buddhism, Brahminism, Islamism, or Paganism. But all this is entirely beside the point which I raise, which is, that a false claim is put forward on behalf of the Church of Rome, to which she, of all others, has the least right, namely, that she has preserved the gnosis, whereas the truth is that she has been, and ever is, its bitterest opponent and persecutor.

In my last letter you misspelled my name, which is—

HENRY BURRY.

[We do not agree with our correspondent that “Y.Z.” has acted in bad faith. “Y.Z.” is evidently assuming as a fact what he believes to be true, though possibly without any sufficient grounds for doing so.—ED. “LIGHT.”]

SIR.—Will you permit a Catholic deeply interested in all that relates to Mysticism, to ask your correspondent “Y.Z.” who and what are the persons whom he designates “*the initiates of the Catholic Church*,” and into what he supposes them to be initiated?

That there is anything of the nature of “secret doctrine,” or any hidden method of initiation into mysteries in the Catholic Church, will be denied, not only by every priest, whether of the regular or of the secular clergy, but by every properly instructed lay person. So extraordinary, indeed, does such a statement sound to Catholic ears, that one cannot but conclude that “Y.Z.” is theorising as to what he deems and dreams to be Catholicity, without knowledge of the most ordinary and elementary facts. All the literature of Mysticism, all records of supernatural events and lives, lie open to public perusal, and may be studied by anyone. That those alone to whom they appeal, and who are by education and by intuition, capable of comprehending them, can enter into their most interior and deepest significance, is inevitable, and the profound words: “He that is able to receive it, let him receive it,” are pre-eminently applicable to this question; but that there is any “inner circle,” or that there is any prohibitory line drawn by authority, is not only a false and unfounded suggestion, but one absolutely in opposition to the fact, of which all Catholics are cognisant, that every kind of secret society is sternly and strongly forbidden by the Church, and that any Catholic, be he priest or layman, joining any such society virtually excommunicates himself.

“Y.Z.” says that “the Catholic Church has ever held that the Blessed Virgin represents the Motherhood of God”—a statement which Catholics would find somewhat strange and bewildering.

The Church proclaims, that Mary is God’s ideal of human Motherhood, and therefore essentially “the Woman,” and “the Mother.” It is also certain, that all that is good and beautiful in any creature, exists primarily in God; and also, that He frequently compares His Divine love to the yearning tenderness of a mother. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church teaches that God in His uncreated Divinity is a pure Spirit, and as such it is not in accordance with Catholic theology to say that there is “a feminine nature in God.” Even created spirits, are, as spirits, free from the element of sex, and there is no difference between

the spirit of a man and the spirit of a woman. Theosophists in their doctrine of re-incarnation recognise this fact.

The Church, believing in the resurrection of the body with all that this dogma imports and implies, holds, that men will remain men, and women will remain women, everlasting, for human beings are spirits “clothed upon,” and are not pure intelligences, as are the angels, who belong, according to Catholic teaching, to a creation anterior to ours, and who are consequently neither masculine nor feminine; but, bright, burning, exalted intellectual entities; and, albeit creatures, solely spiritual existences.

“VERA.”

SOCIETY WORK.

[Correspondents who send us notices of the work of the Societies with which they are associated will oblige by writing as distinctly as possible and by appending their signatures to their communications. Inattention to these requirements often compels us to reject their contributions. No notice received later than the first post on Tuesday is sure of admission.]

THE STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, WORKMAN'S HALL, WEST HAM-LANE, STRATFORD, E.—Meetings each Sunday at 7 p.m. Speaker for July 30th, Mr. J. Veitch.—J. RAINBOW, Hon. Secretary.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY, 311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—We are pleased to record good attendances at our meetings, and the efficient sustaining of the work by our own members. Next Sunday, séance, 11.30 a.m.; Spiritual gathering, 7 p.m. Wednesday, Inquirers' meeting, 8.30 p.m.—CHARLES M. PAYNE.

FOREST HILL, 23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD.—On Thursday last Mr. Lucas, assisted by Mrs. Collins and friends, carried out a lengthy and excellent programme of sacred and secular music. A vote of thanks was afterwards passed to Mr. Lucas and Mrs. Collins for coming forward in this way to brighten the Forest Hill society by these musical entertainments. Sunday next, Mr. Dale at 7 p.m.; Thursday, circle at 8.30 p.m.—J. B., Secretary.

14, ORCHARD-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.—On Sunday last Mr. Norton's guides discoursed upon our great Exemplar's charge to his disciples, “Love ye one another,” which was listened to with profound attention. Mrs. Mason's guides gave us advice upon diet and health. Clairvoyance, all descriptions being recognised. Next Sunday at 7 p.m., open circle; Tuesday at 8 p.m., séance, Mrs. Mason.—J. H. B., Hon. Secretary.

SPIRITUAL HALL, 86, HIGH-STREET, MARYLEBONE, W.—On Sunday evening last, July 23rd, there was a crowded audience to hear Mr. J. J. Morse on “Heaven as it was, is, and will be.” A very fine discourse, requiring a verbatim report to convey any idea of the masterly way in which the subject was handled. Such addresses must be heard to be appreciated. Next Sunday evening at 7 p.m., Mrs. Treadwell, “Progression of the Soul.”—H.R.

THE SPIRITUALISTS' INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.—Information and assistance given to inquirers into Spiritualism. Literature on the subject and list of members will be sent on receipt of stamped envelope by any of the following International Committee:—America, Mrs. M. R. Palmer, 3101, North Broad-street, Philadelphia; Australia, Mr. J. Webster, 5, Peckville-street North, Melbourne; France, P. G. Leymarie, 1, Rue Chabanais, Paris; Germany, E. Schlochauer, 1, Moubijou-place, Berlin, N.; Holland, F. W. H. Van Straaten, Apeldoorn, Middellaan, 682; India, Mr. T. Hatton, State Cotton Mills, Baroda; New Zealand, Mr. Graham, Huntley, Waikato; Sweden, B. Fortenson, Ade, Christiania; Russia, Etienne, Geispitz Grande, Belozerski, No. 7, Lod. 6, St. Petersburg; England, J. Allen, Hon. Sec., 14, Berkley-terrace, White Post-lane, Manor Park, Essex; or, W. C. Robson, French correspondent, 166, Rye Hill, Newcastle-on-Tyne.—The Manor Park branch will hold the following meetings at 14, Berkley-terrace, White Post-lane, Manor Park:—The last Sunday in each month, at 7 p.m., reception for inquirers. Also each Friday, at 8 p.m. prompt, for Spiritualists only, the study of Spiritualism. And at 1, Winifred-road, Manor Park, the first Sunday in each month, at 7 p.m., reception for inquirers. Also each Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m., inquirers' meeting.—J. A.

THE blossom cannot tell what becomes of its odour, and no man can tell what becomes of his influence and example, that roll away from him and go beyond his ken on their perilous mission.—BEECHER.

NOTHING, surely, need be lost even if some part of what might seem immediate converse with a soul known and dear should prove rather to be a faint, a confused, a grotesque intimation that somewhat within us also is an integral element in the Source and Sum of Things. No communion of finite with finite soul can be like the communion of finite soul with Infinite;—“the flight of the One to the One.” No other knowledge can be like the knowledge that not far from every one of us is that indwelling and limitless Spirit which—as one of these strangely-written messages themselves has phrased it—“is at once thine innermost Self and thine ever unattainable Desire.”

—F. W. H. MYERS.